DoD News Briefing
Tuesday, June 9, 1981, 11:30 a.m.
(Henry E. Catto, Jr., ASD/PA)

Good morning, everyone.

Q: Can you detail for us, in any way, what kind of weapons, weapons systems and ordnance the Israelis used in their attack on the Iraqi reactor?

A: I will tell you what I know. Basically, comment on ordnance and operations is going to come out of the State Department, but I'll be happy to share with you what I know about the situation thus far.

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The raid apparently took place Sunday morning about 11:30 --

Q: In the morning?

A: This is our time now.

Q: I heard it was dawn, the first light, there.

A: Your ability to translate time is a lot better than mine is. We found out about it at 1540 that Sunday afternoon, I believe, when the American Embassy in Tel Aviv was informed. Apparently the Israelis tell us that there were F-15s, six of them, and F-16s, eight of them, involved. The F-16s did the bombing. The F-15s were used as a protective cover. And once again I want very strongly to stress that this is all information from the Israelis. We have no way independently of confirming it.

Q: Were there Hawkeyes used?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: E2Cs used as well? Israeli E2C s?

A: No, I have no information on that, and that is the crop as far as the technicalities of the raid that I know about.

Q: This is American equipment, right? This is American-made equipment?

A: This is American-made equipment.

Q: Sold to the Israelis or given to the Israelis.

A: Correct.

Q: Now is this a violation of the sales agreement or the grant agreement?

A: That has to be determined. An investigation is going on as to the status of that. The way I understand the law is that a report is due to be given promptly to Congress by the Administration, by the President, on the receipt of any alleged violation of the Military Sales Act. If the violation is found to be substantial, that country will be ineligible for future deliveries.

Q: How do you define substantial?

A: The law does not, it doesn't spell out substantial. That becomes a matter of art, not science, so that's a subjective judgment that has to be made. Let me just finish the legal --

Q: Deliveries may be cut off?

A: The country may be, what I said is the country may become ineligible for future delivery. The President, however, can find, if he judges it appropriate, that U.S. security would be adversely affected by such a cutoff in which case he can continue to make deliveries. However, if a joint resolution is passed by Congress determining that there is substantial violation, deliveries can be finally and permanen cut off. So that is my understanding of how the --

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Q: Can we go back to the President's role on this again?
A: Yes, sir.

Q: As you said, would you repeat what you said?
A: The President is required to report promptly to Congress on the receipt of information of a possible violation.

Q: If he finds that U.S. security would be affected by a sales cutoff or a grant aid cutoff, he may then waive the --
A: He may waive the cutoff, yes.

Q: Who does the investigation on this? The National Security Council?
A: It will be a combination of all of the elements involved. Of course, the Defense Department will weigh in, the State Department, NSC, and of course the President will make the decision.

Q: Is that going on right now?
A: That has begun, yes.

Q: (inaudible)
A: The State Department, National Security Council, of course the President, all of the foreign policy elements of the government.

Q: How long will it take to complete the report?
A: The report is due promptly. Once again, you have a non-scientific word. I don't think it should take terribly long, but I'm not going to get into making a guess.

Q: Henry, there appears to have been no advance warning of the attack. We didn't know about it until the Israelis told us. Is there any concern about a possible failure of U.S. intelligence -- is U.S. intelligence absolved from this? What is the feeling?
A: No, there is no concern that U.S. intelligence has in any way, shape or form failed. This was not an operation that involved U.S. forces. We were not informed in any way of it in advance, and it came as a thunderous surprise to the U.S. government.

Q: You said we were told what kind of planes these were. Were we also told what kind of bombs were used?
A: They apparently were 2,000 pound bombs used, so-called dumb bombs. Iron bombs.

Q: Dumb bomb?
A: Dumb bombs.

Q: 200 pounds?
A: 2,000 pounds.

Q: Is there annoyance at this? Shouldn't the Israelis have told the United States? Didn't we expect some kind of an arrangement with them to hear about things like this so that we don't get blind sided?
A: I think it is safe to tell you the Secretary said as to what his reaction to it was. The action was strongly to be condemned. It complicates the chances for success for the Habib mission, although that mission will assuredly go on. The Secretary has, in the Department, directed that a full-scale investigation of the continuance of aid be made, working of course with the other entities that I mentioned. And then, as I say, it will be submitted to Congress once the finding is determined.

Q: Is this a separate investigation from the joint U.S. Government investigation of --

A: No, I'm just talking again about the, I'm now reading what the Secretary said. When I asked him: "How do you react to that?"

Q: But I mean the full-scale investigation that he's directed is part of this government-wide --

A: Sure, yes.

Q: He sounds angry. Was he?

A: I will leave it to you to determine that, infer from the words. I'm not going to characterize his emotional state. We are examining the question of authority continuing aid under the Foreign Military Sales Act, he said. And efforts for peace will be made measureably more difficult. And he stressed in closing that we had absolutely no foreknowledge of this whatsoever.

Q: Henry, if the United States cuts off aid to Israel as a result of this, Israel could be finished as an entity, as a nation. Would the United States permit that realistically?

A: I think that falls into the category of speculation and I think it's just not something I'm going to get into.

Q: What do we still owe them in F-16s and the rest of the planes?

Q: What's the status of transfer?

A: I have those figures. Israel has ordered 40 F-15s, 25 have been delivered. Israel has ordered 75 F-16s, 53 have been delivered.

Q: Anything else? Ground equipment, tanks?

A: I have no information on that.

Q: Wouldn't the AWACS have picked this up?

A: No, there was no way in the world for the AWACS to have picked this up. It was simply too far away, and furthermore, the AWACS mission, you see, is aimed strictly at the Arabian Gulf, not toward the north, and it was carrying out its mission and there was not a single solitary blip. It was far too far away.

Q: They were up, then?

A: They were up, that is correct.

Q: Did they encounter any resistance at all, the Israelis?

A: I had no knowledge on that, I have to refer you to State.

Q: Do you know the route that they flew, Henry? Did they tell you about the refueling along the way? Those two things.

A: No, I'll have to refer you to State for those things. I've given all the details I have on the mission.

Q: Have we assisted the Israelis in equipping the F-16s in their ground attack versions? Have they purchased equipment from us? Have we advised them how to convert the F-16 to ground attack mission?

A: I would doubt that they need much advice on how to handle F-16s. Seeing the surgical precision that they used on that --

Q: They used their own equipment then? What they used on the F-16s.

A: I have no information on precisely which equipment was used.

Q: You used the term surgical precision, which leads one to believe, because of the way that that particular facility was protected, that you have to be an awfully good pilot to get a dumb bomb right down the chute. Are you sure there weren't precision guided munitions used on this?

A: That is what I have been told. I have been assured and just asked the question before I came over here.

Q: Who assured you? Was it the Israelis or was it our people?

A: It was our people.

Q: But they're getting their information from the Israelis?

A: That is correct. All of this information comes from the Israelis.

Q: It sounds like you can't make up your mind, when you're saying surgical precision and at the same time talking about strongly condemning, whether you admire them or are angry at them or are both.

A: You cannot help but admire technical proficiency, which is what they displayed. We strongly condemn the act.

Q: If aid is cut off, that will include spare parts for the F-16s and F-15s as well, right?

A: I'm sure that is correct.

Q: What grounds, is the aid cut off, what do they have to do to force the issue? What would they have had to attack to go on the defensive, was it purely defensive? How does that law work?

A: As I understand, the law, the caveat that is put on these sales is that the equipment sold or given has to be for defensive purposes.

Q: Do you know whether -- this was the first time I believe that F-16s in such quantity were used in any kind of a raid anywhere. Would it be, do you think that the Air Force, the American Air Force, is satisfied with the performance of these planes?

A: I'd refer you to the Air Force on that, Richard.

Q: I just want to clarify just what it is that Weinberger has ordered be done. Is he looking at the authorities for the possibility of cutting off aid to the, or further sales to the Israelis, or further deliveries? Can you --

A: He has requested the General Counsel, using whatever resources are necessary here within the building, to find out precisely what the law requires and come up with recommendations.

Q: Is there any indication of heightened readiness either on the borders of Israel, within Iraq, or within Israel itself?

A: That again is a State Department question, Jack. I have no information on it.

Q: Could you go into the dollar figures on how much we've already delivered and how much is still to be delivered?

A: I do not have dollar figures. All I have is numbers of planes.

Q: Now this is -- 40 F-15s have been ordered and 25 delivered?

A: Yes, sir, that is correct.

Q: Is Weinberger's investigation by itself or is it part of the government investigation?

Q: Is he feeding it into the government investigation?

A: Exactly, yes.

Q: So he may recommend one thing and the rest of the government may not recommend that. Could that —

A: I suppose that's possible.

Q: Henry, does the Department at this point -- there's no question that U.S. supplied planes were used. The question is, were they used somehow defensively, even though they attacked? There are people on the Hill who say this is the ultimate defense by getting these guys before they build the bomb and get you. Does the Department have any view as to whether sometimes you can have an air attack on another country and it be labeled defensive and fall under the --

A: No, the Department has no view that I know of on that subject. It may develop one in the course of looking into the situation.

Q: What specifically is the Secretary condemning about the attack here?

A: The fact that it took place.

Q: The Israelis regularly attack the forces in Lebanon.

A: Never Iraq.

Q: No, never Iraq, but they've dumped a lot of hardware with U.S. supplied planes —

A: He condemned it inter alis because it made more difficult the chances of success of the Habib mission which is of course of great interest to --

Q: Certainly those attacks on Lebanon make chances of peace difficult also. What is the difference in the Secretary's view between this attack and previous attacks on Lebanon?

A: I have not asked him for a critical exegesis of the difference between the attacks. This is sort of a new dimension, I think, and this is where the problem lies.

Q: I just would want you to fill out, if you would, the response you gave to Fred about the General Counsel, and you ended up by saying the General Counsel should make a study and then make recommendations. Recommendations concerning what?

A: On what the U.S. Government position should be as to whether or not the law has been violated.

Q: And then as far as what to do about it, if indeed it was violated, that is the second step?

A: That is a further step which has to be taken, and after the President makes a decision as to what he wants to tell Congress, and then of course Congress is going to have to get into the act too.

Q: Well, he has to determine whether the bombing of this reactor was an offensive act or a defensive act, that will be left to the General Counsel?

A: No, sir. I'm sure that will be done —

Q: That is the key element to the decision of whether —

A: That is clearly an important element in the decision.

Q: Can I just draw you out a little bit on that, it's very easy to get this off the track. It would seem to me that our knowing that it would be some kind of task force to make the determination of (a) whether the law was broken; and (b) what to do about it. Now is that the way it's going to work? In other words, your General Counsel, the State Department General Counsel and the White House

General Counsel are going to meet as a group and do this or are you all going off in your own directions?

A: I do not think that that has been decided. I have not asked General Counsel Taft precisely what the steps are going to be, that he will take.

Q: I assume that there is a moratorium on all deliveries and sales negotiations with Israel right now -- until we reevaluate the whole situation.

A: No decision has been made yet on a moratorium of sales to Israel.

Q: Wasn't the same facility defended by missiles? Were they used? Was any other defensive weaponry used?

A: I'll have to refer you to State on that, I don't know.

Q: Could I ask you to clarify the moratorium. You said on sales to Israel, how about deliveries of items already --

A: I would include that. No decision has been made on deliveries or sales.

Q: They're still going on. Deliveries are still going on?

A: There is nothing scheduled for delivery as of today that I know of. There is nothing --

Q: That would be interesting to know. When is the next delivery scheduled?

A: I think the next delivery is scheduled to begin sometime later this week.

Q: What is to be delivered?

A: Let's see if I have that. Michael, do you remember the answer to that? I can't find it. That was that one you brought in -- let us take that for you. Wait a minute, I just found it. F-16s.

Q: How many?

A: Four.

Q: When was that?

A: Friday.

Q: Where are they now?

A: I don't know.

Q: It's kind of important. If indeed four more F-16s are slated to be delivered Friday, are you going to try and have a judgment up or down between now and Friday as to whether or not the delivery should go forward?

A: I can't answer that. I don't know.

Q: Is this a possibility? Viable possibility of not delivering next week of these airplanes?

A: That is speculative, I can't answer.

Q: Is it being considered?

A: I can't qualify -- the whole thing is being looked at. And I'm sure that that is going to be among the things that will have to be considered.

Q: Would you allow the possibility, Henry, that the planes would be held up pending the completion of the investigation?

A: I wouldn't rule it in, wouldn't rule it in. Just don't know. It's just too early to tell. That is the problem.

Q: Whose determination would that be? Would that be the Secretary's, to hold up those planes?

A: I think that decision, although here I cannot tell you for sure, but I am sure the Secretary would make a decision like that in conjunction with the State Department and the National Security Council and the President.

Q: These planes come right off the line and then get shipped over, is that right?

A: I don't know what the mode of transport is.

Q: Are these flown over, do you know? I think they're flown over.

A: They may be, I don't know what the plan for getting there is, the plan for thes

Q: What can you tell us about the Israeli contention that the plant about to come line would soon be able to produce a bomb? Can you tell us anything about it?

A: I have no knowledge of that. I'll have to refer you again to the State Department.

Q: What do you know about that plant? What stage it was at and what it was capable of?

A: I know absolutely nothing about it. I have no idea what it was capable of.

Q: Do you have any idea about radiation --

A: Sorry?

Q: Leakage of radiation as a result of the strike?

A: No, I do not.

Q: Did the Secretary address that? I mean, in the sense that, he condemns it, but at the same time, United States policy has long been that we opposed proliferation of nuclear weapons. Did he, did that come up, I mean, that it's nice, in other words, to have it blown up, we're just sorry it had to be blown up so obviously?

A: The Secretary clearly is a believer in the rule of law, and he would not be interested in something that is totally extralegal as this.

Q: Is this going to be the subject of a National Security Coundil meeting?

A: There is, I believe, a National Security Council meeting scheduled this week. I suspect strongly that this will come up.

Q: Will that be the area actually for a decision to be made? I hate to be the one to say this because you're always saying to State or what have you, but isn't this a decision to be made either by the Cabinet or the National Security Council rather than the Secretary of Defense.

A: Norm, I just can't answer that. I don't know. It sounds logical to me, but I don't know.

Q: When is the meeting? Has the meeting been moved up or changed?

A: To my knowledge it has not been changed. I believe it was scheduled for tomorrow, but I'm not sure of that.

Q: Do you recognize or not that Israel and Iraq are in a state of war?

A: The topic hasn't come up in my hearing.

Q: To get back to George's question earlier on this, on concern about American intelligence and prior knowledge and so on. You mean, you say there was no concern at all since this didn't involve American forces, and yet this is a very, it's always been

very hot spot of the world where war can break out almost at any time. Do you mean that there is no concern on the Department of Defense that we're unable to detect when some sort of an assault is taking place on a big scale? There is no concern about that?

A: That strikes me as a speculative question. I'm sure the Department of Defense would love to know in advance when every military operation in the world is going to take place, but there is just no way for that to come true. So one has to be realistic.

Q: Is there concern or anger that a major ally of the United States did not inform the United States before it was to take a major action of this type?

A: I think as far as the emotional reaction of the U.S. Government, you'd have to check that with the State Department. I think that Dean Fischer's comment was that he condemned it.

Q: Where is the emotions desk at the State Department?

A: It's right next to the motor pool. (Laughter)

Q: Looking a little bit further ahead, is there any thought of reconsidering the arms sales agreement to Saudi Arabia, the AWACS and the F-15s on the idea that if that can only exacerbate in that part of the world giving another nation yet greater flexibility to strike its neighbors with American made equipment.

A: No.

Q: Is there any reaction from the Saudi officials that have been visiting the Pentagon here in the last day or so on what sorts of -- was it brought up in the talks that occurred yesterday?

A: Jack, I, having not been a participant, can't answer it, and it's not a question that I asked. I don't know.

Q: Going back to the violation, the apparent only issue is whether the reactor was coming on line that could produce nuclear plutonium or nuclear weapons grade material, that could then be manufactured into a weapon that would threaten Israel's security. Do you see any other issue to be resolved here when you're looking at whether Israel violated the law?

A: I wouldn't want to get into characterizing legal matters.

Q: Not legal as much as what the issue is that you're looking into, it seems to be the only apparent problem in dispute.

A: That is to say whether it was defensive or offensive.

Q: Whether they could produce nuclear weapons and therefore whether they would threaten the security of Israel and therefore could Israel take a defensive action. Do you see any other issues that are involved?

A: There may well be, but I have not heard them discussed if there are.

Q: So that is the basis on which this decision is going to be made?

A: No, I didn't say that. The decision will be made after a full exploration of all of the issues involved. Not just one, everything, but I don't know what other ones are.

Q: So then the U.S. will look into whether or not the Iraqis were ready to build a bomb. That will be part of the investigation?

A: I can't say that it will be. It would seem logical that we would want to know as much as we could, but that is probably very sharply limited.

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Q: Will the AWACS mission be changed around?
A: The AWACS mission will be the same, that is to say to protect it against attack across the Arabian Gulf.

Q: Let me just make sure we're on the right wave-length here. Is Secretary Weinberger aware that the delivery of four more F-16s is imminent?
A: He is.

Q: What is his feeling about whether or not to hold up delivery pending completion of the investigation?
A: This is going to -- his feeling is going to depend on what the legal people come up with and recommend to him.

Q: Are you going to be able to complete that by the time the planes have to depart?
A: I have no idea what the time table is going to be.

Q: Can I take you back to the sort of grudging feeling of admiration that might come from this building about a country that is able to pull off a highly secret raid successfully. Is that, are you getting that sort of across the board? Where are you pulling that from? The Secretary's office? And again, what is the feeling?
A: That was personal on my part. I have not talked about that with any of the Air Force officials, so I have no guidance to give you on how the rest of them feel.

Q: Another subject, Poland. Are you concerned about the increased tension there, the past couple of days?
A: We don't characterize the state of tension in --

Q: But there is, the state of tension which you wouldn't want to, would like to see dminished.
A: Of course we're always in favor of diminished tensions everywhere.

Q: Have you seen any more movement of Russian troops around Poland?
A: I have heard of nothing out of the ordinary.

Q: Is there anything new on the bomber decision?
A: The bomber decision is going to be made by the Secretary in the next few days at which time, I say the bomber decision, that is to say that he wants to recommend to the President will be decided in the next few days. And then the recommendation of the Secretary of Defense will be given to the President and a final decision will be made.

Q: Has there been any charge in the alert status or deployment of any American forces as a result of --
A: No.

Q: Has any thought been given to finding out the secrets of the Israeli maintenance of the F-15? They got six of 25 up which is a hell of a lot better than we could do.

Q: On the Poland thing, on August 14th the U.S. Army is going to be competing in the Fourth Helicopter World Championship against other countries including the Soviet Union and this year it's being held in Poland.

A: Championship of what?

Q: Helicopter maneuvering and things. It's an annual thing. It's being held in Poland on August 14th. Do you feel that it's right that we should —

A: Ramon, you win the Lester Konsolving prize for the day. I'll have to take that for you. I have no idea.

Q: Do you feel the U.S. should be competing against the Soviets in Poland?

A: Permit us to look into that.

Q: Can you also find out which way a Polish helicopter -- (laughter).

Q: Is there a pending decision on the M-X or is that being, is the decision being delayed because the Townes Commission is having a little trouble getting its act together?

A: I've heard no comment that the Townes Commission is having any trouble getting its act together. All along the hope has been that the timeframe would be somewhere toward the end of this month. One must keep in mind that these people are volunteers and they're working pro bono publico, as it were, and when they [will] finally come up with a report, we don't know.

Q: Is there an effort by this Administration to clamp down on leaks, particularly here at the Pentagon, in a unified effort to accomplish that end?

A: No. I'm really glad that you asked that because I read with interest the story in the paper on Saturday and I wish I'd had a chance to talk to the writer of it beforehand, before it was published, because there is absolutely no concerted effort within the U.S. Government to clamp down on the free flow of information at all. Indeed, and I only, of course, speak for the Department of Defense, but I think that the record of this Administration with respect to the flow of information and the granting of interviews and to access to senior officials, has been nothing short of startling.

Q: How many ships do we have in the eastern Mediterranean?

A: Just, before you take the easy answer, Hugh, let me tell you what we have done.

The Administration's been in office 141 days. During that time the Secretary of Defense himself has had 83 separate events involving the press that I know of, and you all may have talked to him at times when I was not aware of it. Of the 83 events, seven were news conferences (two in the Pentagon), 14 were speeches and remarks, 32 were interviews with, separate interviews, with print and electronic media, 13 times he was on Sunday talk shows, the mroning programs like Good Morning America or Today or their foreign equivalents, and 17 times he was met while journalists have breakfast and he is asked to talk.

Only very rarely do they let him get a bit of eggs. In addition to this, and not counting the inquiries made of my office, which of course run to the hundreds, the thousands by now I expect, there have been 106 separate press interviews on the record and on background with senior defense officials. And of course, you may have had many more telephone calls that that, but this is set piece interviews with defense officials, 106 of them.

The military services tell me that here in the Pentagon alone since January 20, they have hosted over 300 press interviews and backgrounders. So it just seems to me to be seriously unfair to suggest that the Department of Defense is in any way, shape or form cutting back on the flow of information.

Q: You were amazingly prepared for that -- are you as prepared for all questions that we thrown at you?

A: Would that I were, Frederick.

Q: On a serious note, I've covered this building eight years now and I've never had a program manager refuse to grant an interview to me. It happened this week. A Captain Lyle Pellock, Director of Surface Electronic Warfare at NAVSEA, has refused through CHINFO, to do an interview with my company. And when asked if someone else could do it they said no one at NAVSEA would do the interview.

It's a program, which is called NATO SEA GNAT, it's one of these joint production programs, nothing is highly classified about it, but he refused to talk to me. I've never had it happen before.

A: I'd certainly like to check into it, but you've got always to keep in mind that the nature and timing of a request may very well determine, if it's on a particularly sensitive subject, whether or not a background can be given.

Q: It's not censored and they're entering an interesting phase in its development. It's a multi-million dollar program.

Q: How many ships do we have in the Eastern Med?

Let's get back to this. I mean, you've got all these figures here, but we don't have any figures on what we have there. Can we reverse that right now?

A: I'm not prepared to go into that right now.

Q: That kind of blows you out of the water.

A: No, I don't really think it does, because here we had a situation that, a single case of a reluctance to pin down numbers and locations of ships, during a time of tension. And it just seems to me that to condemn the Department as putting on the lid because of that is grossly unfair. And furthermore, I think we ought to always keep in mind in conjunction with the comments that have been , that were made indeed in that article, that you must make a separation between the necessity of this Department to protect itself legally. We're charged under the law to protect ourselves against the leakage of classified information. So keep that in one compartment of your mind, but keep in the other compartment that there is an equal requirement that we share, to the extent it is possible to do, with the American people what is going on, and we are committed both to defending the law and to being opposed to leaks and we are commi' ed to sharing with the American people the information that matters of security and privacy permit us to.

Q: Can I go to another subject. Do you know anything about Russian advisors in Nicaragua?

A: No sir, I'd have to refer you to State on that.

Q: Has your concern for leaks diminished since Carlucci put out this memorandum?

A: My concern with leaks is always great. It is, leaks are a dangerous game that people can use for their own ends that can hurt the country, as I'm sure we all, being grown people, are aware. And yes indeed I continue to be concerned with leaks. I do not want them to happen.

Q: Are there any plumber's groups set up to find out leaks?

A: No sir.

Q: Isn't it a fact though that a concern for free flow of information that your office has directed a variety of officials to limit the amount of information it gives out on background?

A: No.

Q: Just to get back one moment on the Israeli thing. On the four F-16's on Friday, what is beyond that? After that delivery, that what is next?

A: I don't know.

Q: In other words, just next step and you don't know --

A: That is the next step and I don't know beyond that.

Q: I think that since you made quite a response on the free flow of information that we should have as part of the record your own reaction to your own memo which is a guidance to your public information officers, and the last graph of which I think it is says that besides that, disclosure of information creates a lot of work for everybody.

A: George, that last graph might have been more felicitously phrased.

Q: Yes, but it's on a record, Henry. It does have impact.

A: I would not say that today. If that's what you want, I would not say that today.

Q: No, well it's all well and good for you to give us those statistics, but if you're going to go with what's on the record, but it's also on the record.

A: But, George, keep very much in mind that we are talking here about the release of unauthorized information, about leaking, and we are opposed to that. We have to be opposed to that.

Q: I know, but that particular guidance has nothing to do with sensitive information. The thrust of that statement was that it makes too much work for --

A: I'll stand on what I said.

Q: Henry, is the definition of a leak, when a reporter talks to a source and in the course of a conversation some information is drawn from that source and turns into a story, or is a leak something somebody does in a sinister fashion, pulls a reporter off to the side into the mens room and puts something in his pocket? No, really, because it's in the eyes of the beholder just what a leak is.

A: No, I don't think so.

Q: Some people think that a leak is anything that doesn't come under a Bluetop.

A: Well, I certainly don't agree with that. I think a leak is the dissemination of information which is classified.

Q: But the Carlucci memo has a sentence in there which also cautions people against talking about matters which are not necessarily classified, but which are in discussion within the building. It doesn't deal with classified matters.. So that seems to me a warning to both the civilian and military people in this building to, other than which you suggest there, they're doing.

A: In the legal trade, although I am not, I repeat, a lawyer, there is a term called baratry which is going out and stirring things up. It's considered bad form. I think that is what Secretary Carlucci was referring to, that there is no reason to try to generate news stories and in effect to do the work of the reporter for him.

Q: Let's get back to your censorship function around here which you deny, but exists. Can you get us figures, you've given us figures on your output, how about, can we get figures on how many times the censorship office down the hall here has gone into action to prevent something from coming out?
A: We'll certainly look into it. I have no --

Q: We get one side, let's get both sides.
A: Is that within the realm of possibilities? I don't know what. --

LtCol Burch: I think we can get some figures on number of cases processed both under Freedom of Information and by our security review office.

Q: When are you expecting the completion of the investigation into the Israeli use of American equipment against Iraq?
A: I have no information on that.

Q: Is it something that will come up this week? Will it be finished this week? Next week?
A: I have no information on it.

Q: Well Henry, getting back to the scheduled deliveries of the F-16s, if the investigation is not complete will the deliveries go ahead?
A: That, I think will have to, that is a decision that has yet to be made.

Q: Getting some sort of an answer on the legalities of this, I would think to use the Secretary's words would be well within the compass of a reasonably competent lawyer. I can't imagine that would take more than a day. You're really talking of the political decision to be made, are you not?
A: There is clearly a political element involved here, yes, and these matters have to be discussed. Political, diplomatic matters as well as legal.

Q: You said that that still has to be decided. In other words, is it possible that a decision, a separate decision may be made on that aspect alone whether or not to continue the delivery of those four planes regardless of the event. Is that going to be a separate decision? Will it have to be made before Friday?
A: Richard, I have no idea. I'm sorry -- but I just simply don't have.

Q: It's an important point.
A: These are procedural matters that have to be gone into and are perhaps being decided right now. I just don't know. I'm as sorry as I can be.

Q: Can you inquire?
A: Sure, I'll be happy to inquire as to what the procedural routes to be followed are.

Q: How complicated can the procedure be to say we're going to hold off delivery --
A: I don't know. I just don't know what the issues are.

Q: Is it possible for the Soviets to launch an attack in the mid-East and catch us as flat footed as the Israelis did?
A: I'm not going to comment on speculative questions. The Israeli attack to the best of my knowledge, was not against us.

Q: We didn't know it was going on, though, didn't know what's happening.
A: It was not directed towards us, don't you see.

MORE

Q: Can you take and find out where these four F-16s are presently and the mode of transportation?
A: I doubt that we would go into the mode of transportation.

Q: Are they at the assembly plant still, or --
A: I'll see what I can find out.

A: Hold it gang. I forgot one thing. Thank you, Mike.

I'm going to be in the Republic of Texas making a speech on Thursday, there will be no regular briefing, but of course Jerry and Ben will be here in case anything comes up you need to find out about.

Press: Thank you.
Mr. Catto: Thank you.

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